

# inside seven

CALTRANS IMPROVES MOBILITY ACROSS CALIFORNIA

GRAY DAVIS, GOVERNOR

MARIA CONTRERAS-SWEET, SECRETARY OF BUSINESS, TRANSPORTATION AND HOUSING AGENCY

JEFF MORALES, DIRECTOR

ROBERT W. SASSAMAN, DISTRICT 7 DIRECTOR

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Inside Seven - a District 7 Edition of the CT News

## HEROES ON CALIFORNIA'S HIGHWAYS

*Caltrans' Snow Crews Save Lives and Improve Mobility During Heaviest Snowfall in Decades*

The beauty and grandeur of Los Angeles and Ventura Counties' rural state highways are magnified during the winter months when hillsides of dazzling, white snow against turquoise-blue skies create an amazing picture – not to mention great skiing, snowboarding and sight-seeing. But with the beauty comes icy, snowbound highways. There is much roadwork to be done that cannot wait until the sun

comes out. In addition to clearing the roads, helping motorists along the way is all in a day's, and night's, work. And who knows better than the men and women of Caltrans' snow crews.

The recent heavier-than-normal snowstorms severely blanketed many areas causing several avalanches on Angeles Crest Highway (2) in the San Gabriel Mountains; snow and ice along I-5's Grapevine, California's major north/south route; and snow on the Antelope Valley Freeway (14) and Route 33 in Ventura. What the motoring public doesn't always see is what goes on behind the scenes and overnight to get the roadways cleared and assist motorists. This past winter, like those before it, Caltrans crews were once again called into action to move mountains of snow and help travelers on California's highways.

West of Los Angeles three feet of snow fell overnight on a 25-mile portion of Highway 33 in Ventura necessitating a two-day closure of the winding, rural roadway. The West Region Maintenance yard in Ojai spearheaded the snow removal efforts



Photo courtesy of Gary Thornhill

**Caltrans Improves Mobility for Winter Travelers.** Maintenance Equipment Operators assist California's motorists by cutting a path through "Mother Nature's" wrath, by leading a convoy of commuters safely through the Grapevine on the Golden State Freeway (I-5) near Gorman.

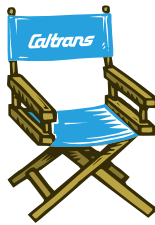
in which ten employees worked non-stop day and night between Wheeler Campground and Lockwood Valley Road. What the Caltrans workers knew was, like in the winters past, to work hard and plow fast to stay ahead of the game. What they didn't know was that by morning they would save two lives.

In the middle of a raging blizzard, two motorists ran out

of gas in the early morning hours while traveling south on Highway 33 where the summit reached 5,080 feet. They became stranded alone in a howling gale in single-digit temperatures in the middle of Los Padres National Forest. The two, a man and his fiancé, were traveling south on Route 33 as an alternate to I-5 due to bad weather. Two Caltrans Equipment Operators, Mike Cabot and Alan Sharon were on duty around midnight plowing snow and had just closed the south end of Route 33 due to extremely heavy snowfall. They began a northbound, 25-mile sweep of the highway to make sure no motorists were on the road. They had just passed the vehicle occupied by the two travelers on their way safely out of the closure area. Instead of making it through the closure, they ran out of gas. With no hope of heat, food or water, there was nothing they could do but wait and hope help would arrive.

Cabot and Sharon continued their northward sweep and plowing of the highway. What normally takes 45 minutes took

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## THE DIRECTOR'S CHAIR

This is the second edition of the new format for *Inside Seven*, the Caltrans District 7 version of Headquarters' *CT News*. I hope all of you enjoy the new style, which is now a common theme for all District newsletters. This new format is similar to the one used by the *Los Angeles Times*, where their regional issues look like the main edition. We are very pleased with the teamwork and guidance from Headquarters in developing a common theme for Caltrans' newsletters throughout the state.

Just when we thought winter was over, a cold spell hit the area again and the Golden State Freeway (I-5), Angeles Crest Highway (2), the Antelope Valley Freeway (14) and Route 33 in Ventura were hit once again with freezing rain and snow. What a change when we just began to see flowers blooming. Please read this month's cover story for all the details on the tremendous snow removal efforts throughout District 7 this winter, and how two Caltrans workers, Mike Cabot and Alan Sharon, saved the lives of two motorists stranded in a snowstorm. The two have been nominated for the Governor's Safety Award. I would also like to commend the Maintenance crews on Route 2 who helped a stranded diabetic motorist and also 100 grade school children trapped by snow. Many thanks to Mike and Alan, as well as the Altadena and Chilao Mountain snow crews for their help with these rescues and for being perfect examples of what Caltrans is all about – caring about the safety of commuters who use our facilities. And I congratulate all our Maintenance crew members for their exceptional hard work, especially in the wintertime working in mud, snow and flood conditions to keep our roads open for the travelling public. It is a tough job and our employees are always ready, willing and able to do an outstanding job year 'round.

Congestion relief is a top priority of Governor Gray Davis. It has always been an issue here in District 7. In this month's issue you will also read about how Caltrans and the California Highway Patrol are leading a new Incident Management Task Force in an effort to save time managing freeway incidents. All agencies involved in traffic management are brainstorming to find better ways to respond to and clear incidents and accidents more quickly. I am very appreciative that CHP Southern Division Chief Mike Brown has taken a co-leadership position with Caltrans on this Task Force. Good communication with all agen-

cies involved and working together as a team to respond to incidents will play a major role in these efforts. In addition, a new piece of tow-truck equipment is available that can upright an overturned big-rig, up to 70,000 pounds, and rotate it in such a way that it will save time and money in major-incident/accident management. Together we are moving forward to show what can be done in Los Angeles to improve congestion.

Caltrans District 7 competed for the first time at the national level and received first place at the Concrete Pavement Association Awards (ACPA) banquet in Florida. I was proud to accept the distinguished award presented for excellence in pavement construction for the San Bernardino Freeway (I-10) long-life pavement improvement project. The State of California, Caltrans and the contractor, Morrison Knudsen, all received beautiful plaques. Caltrans also received runner-up in the Traffic Management category for the project. I would like to thank the ACPA and Tom Salata from the Western States Chapter for the prestigious award. They recognized the very difficult work done in congested areas that Caltrans staff work in, as well as the innovative techniques with long-life pavement that are being used to rehabilitate California's highways. I also wish to once again thank all Caltrans employees involved in this major improvement project for their outstanding efforts, including Planning, Design, Caltrans Lab (for mix designs), Surveys, Construction, Traffic Management and Media Relations/Public Affairs.

And also, many thanks to the motoring public who responded to all the information put out on the project and found alternate routes or decided to stay out of the project area during the extended weekend closures. These same strategies will be used for future projects like the new Long Beach Freeway (710) long-life pavement improvement project. Some freeway pavements in the Los Angeles metropolitan areas are well over 30-40 years old and additional long-life improvement reconstruction projects are on the horizon to rehabilitate these freeways. The Caltrans long-life pavement team came together, as they have in the past and will in the future, to deliver the finest improvement projects for California's motorists. •

ROBERT W. SASSAMAN  
District Director

# LONG BEACH HARBOR SCENIC DRIVE ADOPTION OFFICIAL



*The Harbor Scenic Drive team celebrates a job well done.*

With the recording of legal Right of Way deeds, a long-awaited adoption of a portion of the Long Beach Freeway (710) and a relinquishment of a portion of the Terminal Island Freeway (103) finally became official.

It all began in 1982 with legislation enacted to enable Caltrans to adopt from the City of Long Beach a 1.5-mile portion of the Long Beach Freeway (710) from Pacific Coast Highway (PCH) to Ocean Boulevard; and to relinquish a one-mile portion of the Terminal Island Freeway (103) from PCH to Willow Street to the City of Long Beach. The project became known as the Harbor Scenic Drive Adoption.

Steve Novotny, Senior Transportation Engineer and Project Manager, joined his project team members and representatives from the Port and City of Long Beach for a project completion gathering at the District Office Building to celebrate in this eagerly anticipated achievement. Other key team members in the effort included John Iwasaki, Office Chief, Right of Way; Greg Farr, Senior Transportation Engineer, Project Development, Branch B; Shay Banduk, Region Engineer, South,

Office of Maintenance Support; and Steve Nakao, Chief, Structures Maintenance and Investigations, South.

Doug Failing, Deputy District Director, was integrally involved with the project since its inception in 1982. He pointed out that the uniqueness of the project greatly increased the challenges. "The State doesn't adopt roadways very often," Failing said. "We generally concentrate more on relinquishing them now." Failing also said he is very pleased with the team's perseverance over the years in the ultimate success of the project.

"The excellent partnership efforts between Caltrans, the City of Long Beach and the Port of Long Beach was instrumental in bringing this project to completion," added Novotny. "This was a great example of a successful teamwork effort with Caltrans and our partnering agencies that paid off with a good end result." •



# Caltrans Hosts First Freeway Incident Management Task Force

*"We are committed to results. Our number one goal: Get the roadway opened."*

- - Frank Quon, Caltrans Deputy District Director of Operations

The major players in Los Angeles freeway incident management joined forces recently at the first convening of the new Los Angeles County Incident Management Task Force. The group of some 40 traffic and law enforcement professionals met February 14 at Caltrans District 7 in Downtown Los Angeles for what is to be a collaborative effort to improve mobility on California's freeways. The main focus and mission is on more effective freeway accident and incident management – to get lanes reopened in the quickest and safest manner possible. The team's efforts in Los Angeles are a test-bed and will expand to every part of the state. And their focus is on results.

Frank Quon, Caltrans Deputy District Director of Operations, welcomed the distinguished gathering of top experts in transportation management from the California Highway Patrol (CHP), the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department, the Los Angeles City Police Department; the Los Angeles County Fire Department; the Automobile Club of Southern California; the Los Angeles City Fire Department; the Freeway Service Patrol (FSP); the California Tow Truck Association; and experts at Caltrans. Quon said that Caltrans will be partnering with these and other agencies to help deal with incidents more effectively and efficiently. "Our number one goal," Quon said, "is to get the roadway opened."

"This is the group that needs to discuss these issues," said Robert W. Sassaman, Caltrans District 7 Director. "One of Governor Davis' top goals is to relieve congestion throughout California. And if we can do it here in Los Angeles, it can be done anywhere in the State."

Chief Mike Brown, CHP Southern Division, agreed. He expressed his optimism for a productive effort in dealing with issues surrounding freeway incident



**Partners in Incident Management.** CHP Chief Mike Brown address members of the first Los Angeles County Incident Management Task Force at the Caltrans District Office Building. Near him standing, left to right, are Robert W. Sassaman, Frank Quon and CHP Captain Richard Briedvelt.

management. He is also hopeful that traffic management protocols will be improved upon, and stressed the importance of "fulfilling our missions both in the public and private sector and to restore traffic as quickly as possible so the motoring public will be inconvenienced as little as possible," Brown said.

The Governor has allotted some \$5 billion for congestion relief — \$1.7 billion in Los Angeles alone that addresses recurrent-type, or everyday congestion, such as "choke points" or bottlenecks. Funds have also been slated for High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) carpool lanes and other capital improvements. Additional monies will go to local agencies; for example the City of Los Angeles Department of Transportation has received several grants for transportation improvements including signal upgrades in the San Fernando Valley; and the

Metropolitan Transportation Authority has received funding for approximately 250 additional buses.

Half of the freeway congestion is day-to-day recurrent congestion. The other half is due to non-recurrent congestion (for example incidents such as accidents, hazardous material spills and cleanup, maintenance and construction lane closures, detours, accidents, wayward animals, stalled vehicles, lost loads and a host of other nuisances that cause traffic tie-ups. The members present each have an expertise in a given area of incident management or emergency response and are all part of the solution. "Non-recurrent congestion is where we need each other's help to begin brainstorming with new and better ideas to cut the time spent on clearing incidents," Sassaman added. "And the product of this meeting will help us to

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## Snow

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them three hours due to the extreme snowfall. And the snow just kept getting worse. Equipment Operator Larry Webber, a 34-year veteran from the Ojai Maintenance Station, said it was the worst and biggest storm since 1973.

Cabot and Sharon, working a twelve-hour shift, came upon the snow-bound vehicle around 5 a.m. and were surprised at the site. "The conditions were brutal when we found them," said Cabot. "There was three to four feet of snow already on the ground, it was snowing hard, it was around 9 degrees and the wind was howling." Sharon added, "To have something like this happen, it made me realize even more that this is why we're out here."

To be safe, Caltrans workers carry at least a two-day's ration of food and water during especially bad weather. Cabot fed them his lunch of hot chicken noodle soup homemade by his



*Highway 33 in Ventura after a moderate snowfall.*

wife. And Sharon offered them protein bars and other snacks, as well as plenty of water and hot coffee. While they tended to the motorists, Equipment Operator Larry Weaverling delivered needed gasoline. The grateful commuters insisted on paying for their trouble, but the three refused to accept, saying, "...We're glad we could help." After relocating to dry land, the two grateful commuters sent a letter of appreciation to Caltrans Maintenance Manager Wayne Johnson, stating, "It's good to know people like this exist – these are the real heroes on the highways."

Cabot and Sharon both agree that they were just out there doing their jobs. "People don't realize how much snow we get in this area, and these hours and working conditions can get really tough," Sharon said. And according to Cabot, part of the reason Caltrans workers are out there is to make sure people on the highways are safe. "We didn't do anything that anyone else on our crews wouldn't have done," he said. "We are here to help." The two workers also wish to acknowledge Larry Weaverling for his invaluable assistance during the rescue.

"I am very proud of Mike, Alan and Larry as well as the rest of



*Equipment Operators Dale Hahn and Dale Luckett move mountains of snow on Angeles Crest Highway (2).*

my hard-working crew members who work 24 hours a day — rain, shine or snow — to make the road safe for the motoring public," said Johnson. Johnson wishes to thank his staff as follows: Supervisor Mike Torbert; Leadworker Henry Mata; and Equipment Operators Larry Webber, Bobby Kilpatrick, Mike Cabot, Rob Kupfer, Alan Sharon, Roger Olmos and Larry Weaverling. In addition, Johnson wishes to express his appreciation to two additional workers who were borrowed from the Ventura Maintenance yard: Maintenance Worker George Fernandez and Equipment Operator Alex Frutos.

To the northeast, the season's snow fell especially hard on Angeles Crest Highway (2). The Chilao and Altadena Mountain Crews were fast to respond when "Frosty the Snowman" came calling with a vengeance. For some 43 days straight, workers were fighting Mother Nature and the wrath she brought with her. One especially heavy storm left an astounding eight feet of snow in its wake, nearly burying road signs completely and bringing out additional crews working around the clock braving the biting cold and unthinkable working conditions. Storm after storm continued to pound the area. Highways disappeared.

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*Snow nearly buries road signs near ski areas on mountainous Angeles Crest Highway (2).*



## Snow

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**Angeles Crest Highway Maintenance Crew.** Left to right, front row: Henry Harris, Kiko Salgado, Dale Haun, Steve Wells, Richard West, Anthony Nava, Dave Britt and Ed Toledo. Second row, left to right: Paul Jackson, Dale Luckett. Back row: left to right: Gabe Gonzalez and Robert Torres. Not pictured: Richard Haberlack, Kevin Henderson and Larry Tiede.

"The snow was so bad that the road virtually closed itself," said Ed Toledo, Maintenance Supervisor. And homes and businesses were nearly encased in what was left behind. Freezing conditions and mountains of snow made removal efforts for Maintenance Area Superintendent Dan Sanchez and Toledo, challenging to say the least. They and their crews wasted no time springing into action.

Sanchez and Toledo's area of responsibility includes over 38 miles of Route 2 at elevations ranging from 500 feet to 7,000 feet. The two have over 15 years of experience between them in the mountainous regions of northeastern Los Angeles County. They both agree that this year's snowfall was, by far, the worst they had ever seen.



**Lancaster Maintenance Crew.** Left to right, kneeling: James Cunningham, Ray Rodarte, and Archie Pollock. Second row, Ron Raylor, Steve Mellinger, Tom Pellerin and Dave Lafayette. Rear: Frank Borsotti and Robert Devor.

In addition to snow removal efforts on state highways, Caltrans workers are glad to help other agencies when the call for help comes in. And that is just what happened one morning when a request was received from Los Angeles County Search and Rescue asking for assistance in helping a diabetic motorist who became stranded at Barley Flats on a county road three miles off Angeles Crest Highway. The man used a cell phone to call for help when pounding snows left him stranded. Caltrans crews were asked to cut a road through the snow to allow County personnel to assist the motorist. "We're happy to be a 'good neighbor' and help whenever we can," said Sanchez. "That's what we're here for."

In another such "good neighbor" rescue, 100 grade school students on a holiday weekend camping trip to Mount Wilson found themselves stuck at a campground on a county road off Highway 2 when they awoke to over five feet of snow that dropped overnight. Once again the call came to Caltrans for help. It took snow crews nearly five hours for graders and snowplows to finally get the students and their chaperones off the mountain. And it was rewarding for Caltrans people to help. "We have the personnel and the equipment to do what is need-



**Lebec Maintenance Crew.** Left to right, kneeling: Kris Rockwell, J. J. Whittkofski and Jimmy Morrow. Second row: Lee Benjamin, Paul Wagner (rear), Craig Smith, Alan Empleo, John Steiner, Charlie Guenther and Jerry Haberlack.

ed, when it is needed," commented Sanchez.

If clearing roads and assisting in rescues weren't enough, it became evident that after 12 feet of snow fell, the possibility of avalanches posed a clear and present danger for Sanchez and his team. Department of Water and Power helicopters took Sanchez and Toledo up and over the mountains to a location called Winston Springs to assess the situation. They discovered that some avalanches had indeed occurred at the higher elevations. In addition, licensed and certified avalanche experts from Los Angeles County ski patrol at Mount Waterman contacted Caltrans. Together they all went back up the mountain and the experts made tests of the snowpack. Jim Hansen, Maintenance Superintendent from Ojai Maintenance Station and the statewide explosives instructor for Caltrans, was flown down the same day for additional assessment. Although the ski patrol experts felt the snowpack was stable, they recommended that,



to be on the safe side, setting some explosive charges would better stabilize the snow. Hansen agreed. Bob Davies, Leadworker from Caltrans Maintenance in South Lake Tahoe, who is specially licensed in avalanche control as an Avalanche Blaster, was summoned. Caltrans personnel Toledo, Hansen, Davies and Dennis Cutting, helped set the charges. Cutting was borrowed from the Malibu Maintenance Station. The four are all Licensed Blasters.

Ten explosive charges were set on the snow-covered mountains in order to help stabilize the avalanches and the hillsides. And the explosives worked. With the avalanches cut down to size, and when experts felt it was safe, crews brought in more heavy equipment to remove the mountains of snow and clear the roadways.

Sanchez and Toldeo want to express their appreciation to all the people who went that extra mile this winter including: Bob Davies; Jim Hansen; Dennis Cutting; Dave McDonough, Equipment Shop 7 Supervisor; Bob Mutterlin and Jerry McClure, Mechanics, Equipment Shop 7; Ray Higa, Chief, Office of District Traffic Manager and his Traffic Management team; the Department of Water and Power; Los Angeles County Search and Rescue; and Los Angeles County Ski Patrol. Sanchez added,



**Newhall Maintenance Crew #1.** Left to right, kneeling: Alan Clark, Tom Gonzalez, and Tom Cowan, Jr. Second row: Chris Erkine, Ron Ellis and Tony Bustamante. Back row: Matt Klasen, Terry Jackson, John Smolich and Robert Arias.

"I especially want to commend the hard work of one of the best snow crews in the state: Supervisor Ed Toledo; Leadworkers Anthony Nava and Richard Haberlack; Equipment Operators Robert Torres, Henry Harris, Dale Luckett; Dave Britt; Dale Hahn, Richard West, Gabe Gonzalez, Kevin Henderson, Larry Tiede, Paul Jackson, Kiko Salgado and Steve Wells.

Farther north, Lee Benjamin, Maintenance Supervisor in Lebec, said this winter brought the heaviest single snowstorm he had seen since 1989. And having worked in the area since 1980, Benjamin should know. The Golden State Freeway (I-5) was closed for some 39 hours straight during the heaviest dusting as 30 inches of snow fell from 8 p.m. February 12 to 10 a.m. February 13. "It was a heavy snow that came down really fast," said Benjamin, forcing the closure of I-5 from Castaic northbound and at the Grapevine southbound, while crews mobilized.

Benjamin's crew, along with help from Ridge Route



**Newhall Maintenance Crew #2.** Left to right, kneeling: Art Gomez, Charles Payne, and Tero Haukka. Second row: Dennis Giammichael, Vince Martinez, Jose Fajardo and Mark Johnson.

Superintendent Jerry Holcomb and Road Crew Supervisor Chris Erskine and their staffs, worked a 24-hour split shift. Personnel labored in freezing temperatures, plowing snow and ice around the clock. At times they could scarcely see the front of their equipment. Even during periods of nearly zero visibility, the crews worked on. "Each storm is unique," said Benjamin. "In the 20 years that I've worked in this area, I've never seen two storms act exactly the same. And nothing less than a total team effort got us through this storm and cleared the highways."

Interestingly, five individual weather stations are located in Benjamin's area between Whittaker Summit and Fort Tejon on I-5. They are utilized because of the differences in altitude in the area and the extreme weather conditions that exist during the winter months. The stations send weather reports directly to the Lebec Maintenance Station via computers, which report air and pavement temperatures, and also precipitation. Three of the

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**Ojai Maintenance Crew.** Left to right, kneeling: Mike Cabot and Larry Webber. Back row: Mike Torbert, Henry Mata, Larry Weaverling and Alan Sharon. (Not pictured: Rob Kupfer, Bob Kilpatrick and Roger Olmos.)

# Snow

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Reporters from CBS Channel 2 interview Maintenance Superintendent Dan Sanchez, right, after a heavy snowfall on Angeles Crest Highway (2).

weather sites have cameras and visibility sensors. Information received from the stations assist Benjamin and his crews in ascertaining whether the roads need to be salted. Salt is used between 26 and 32 degrees to help break up snow and ice. Sand and volcanic cinders are also used to help with traction on the roadways.

Erskin said his crews worked tirelessly 24 hours a day and he was glad when the snow finally let up. "I would like to extend my appreciation to the following personnel for their unwavering involvement in the snow removal operation, which included Equipment Operators Ron Ellis, John Smolich, Tom Gonzalez, Alan Clark, Bob Arias, Stephanie Dym, Tom Cowan, Jr., and Terry Jackson; and Maintenance Worker Tony Bustamante. Our people did an excellent job."

Benjamin also said he appreciates the monumental efforts the crews put in this past winter. "I would like to thank my hard-

working personnel for their untiring efforts. They are: Maintenance Leadworkers Kris Rockwell, Dennis Stubblefield and Dave Batcholder; and Equipment Operators Allan Empleo, Charles Guenther, Jerry Haberlack, James Morrow, Craig Smith, John Steiner, Paul Wagner and James Wittkofski. Stubblefield and Batcholder were borrowed from the night sweeping crew to assist Benjamin's crew. "I would also like to thank the Caltrans Equipment Shop 7 mechanics who kept our vehicles and snow removal equipment running and made necessary repairs in the field. We could not have succeeded in these efforts without everyone's team effort."

The biggest snowfall of the season also dropped nearly ten inches on Route 14 in Palmdale and Lancaster. The snow forced crews to close the highway, which is the main artery between the San Fernando, Santa Clarita and Antelope Valleys. Maintenance crews from Lancaster and Newhall worked in frigid temperatures day and night plowing snow and sanding icy spots for better traction. Crews were hard at work overnight near Lancaster and Palmdale clearing roads for the motoring public,



This call box is the only hint that a state highway exits under nearly five feet of snow on Route 2.

where temperatures dropped to nearly zero degrees and visibility was hampered. Some 15 crew members and 10 snow plows were utilized on a 24-hour-a-day basis during this effort.

At the heaviest snowfall on Route 14, Steve Mellinger, Highway Maintenance Leadworker, said visibility was down to 15 feet. When the snowplows cleared the roads overnight and the snow turned to rain in the morning, the highway reopened around 6:30 a.m. February 13. California Highway Patrol (CHP) and Caltrans crews were stationed at each end of the closure assisting motorists. "When the Grapevine is closed, Route 14 takes the brunt of the additional traffic traveling north," said Mellinger. "We were extremely busy, but everyone pulled together as a team and got the commuters rolling." Mellinger also said it is always encouraging to see how everyone comes together during major events, like storms, to get the job done. Mellinger also noted that, considering the amount of snow and the rate in which it came down and with all the extra traffic



Bob Mutterlin, Caltrans Mechanic from Equipment Shop 7, inspects a vehicle after a severe storm blankets Route 2.

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## PROJECT MANAGEMENT UPDATE

## Exceeding Expectations!

*By Raja Mitwasi, Deputy District Director, Program and Project Management*

The following letter details the outstanding accomplishments achieved in exceeding project milestones. I wish to personally thank all the functional units for their commitment to teamwork in these endeavors. Working together, Caltrans gets the job done!

Dear Raja Mitwasi:

Congratulations on successfully completing 107 percent of your project milestones! Upon completion of the delivery plans, second quarter ending December 31, 2000, your District appears to have completed the following number of project milestones:

<u>Milestone</u>	<u>Planned (#)</u>	<u>Actual (#)</u>	<u>Completed (%)</u>
• Project Approval and Environmental Document	38	29	76%
• Right of Way Certification	14	19	136%
• Ready to List	16	12	75%
• Contract Completion Acceptance	<u>8</u>	<u>21</u>	<u>263%</u>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>107%</b>

The Capital Program is focused on meeting delivery commitments. Thank you for exceeding 100% of your milestones. Meeting your planned commitments will help the Department maintain its high integrity with our customers. Keep up the excellent work!

JOHN A. BODA, CHIEF  
Headquarters Division of Project Management



*Caltrans workers remove snow and slush from I-5 near Gorman.*

## Snow

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from I-5, they were able to get the commute traffic flowing in record time. "We train for emergency situations and when they happen, that training pays off. My hat's off to all the members of the Lancaster Maintenance crew, as well as staff from Newhall and North Hollywood. Great job, everyone!"

According to Charles Payne, Maintenance Supervisor, Newhall, everyone on the Maintenance crews is specially trained in snow removal and specialized snow-removal equipment. "They are well aware of what needs to be done during a snowstorm and all did a great job," he said. And Tom Pellerin, Maintenance Supervisor in Lancaster for 15 years, agreed. "We don't get snow every year out here," he said. "It has been quite a few years since we've been hit this hard. I would like to thank the Lancaster road crew and Equipment Operators from Newhall, Valencia, San Fernando and North Hollywood for their hard work and long hours during the major snowstorm."

Pellerin, Mellinger and Payne would like to acknowledge their crews members for a job well done. They are: Equipment Operators Frank Borsotti, James Cunningham, Robert Devoe, Tom Gracia, Dave Lafayette, Ray Rodarte, Archie Pollock, Ron Taylor; Sarah Hartz; Leadworker Dave Lawrence; and Equipment Operators Mark Johnson, Art Gomez, Vince Martinez, Dennis Giammichele, Jose Fajardo II, Tero Haukka and Briana Renfro."

Caltrans would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the CHP for their ongoing partnership and assistance. Once again, as each year before, teamwork gets the job done. Chuck Webster, North Region Maintenance Manager for I-5 and Routes 2 and 14 summed it up best when he said, "Many thanks to all the men and women, every single one, who took part in this season's snow removal efforts working long hours in difficult conditions." Each played a major role in keeping California's highways clean and clear during winter, summer, spring and fall — as Caltrans "highway heroes" keep California safely on the move. •

## Caltrans Wins National Award For Long-Life Pavement Project

Caltrans District 7 received a prestigious National Award at the recent "Excellence in Concrete Pavement National Awards" Program in Orlando, Florida. The awards, co-sponsored by the American Concrete Pavement Association (ACPA) and *Concrete Construction Magazine*, are in their 11th year and are presented to the most noteworthy paving accomplishments from across the country. The award recognized the best concrete pavement construction projects in the nation. Items for consideration included increased efficiency, quality and highway smoothness, reduced costs and a minimum of road user delays.

Caltrans was the co-winner in the ACPA's Concrete Pavement Restoration Award category along with its contractor, Morrison-Knudsen Corporation for work on the San Bernardino Freeway (I-10) Long-Life Pavement improvement project in Pomona. The pilot project marked the first time that new, faster setting and longer lasting concrete was used

on a major freeway repaving project. And the reconstruction process utilized the latest technology and specifications. Three extended weekend closures helped expedite the project, and ultimately Caltrans and the contractor were able to open the freeway just ahead of schedule.

The project area on I-10 is heavily traveled (240,000 Average Daily Traffic), is a major truck and goods movement corridor and had one of the largest concentrations of deteriorating pavement in the Southland. The seven-day-a-week project cost some \$15.9 million and will give an amazing 30-40 years of service to motorists in return.

Robert W. Sassaman, District 7 Director, proudly accepted the award. "The Department's goal in testing different types of paving techniques is to find new ways to reconstruct pavement in less time, but with a longer service life, while minimizing disruption of traffic for California's commuters," he said.



*Caltrans' District 7 Director, Robert W. Sassaman, left, accepts national awards from ACPA's Tom Salata.*

What is learned on the I-10 project in California will be applied to aging freeways throughout the nation. Plans are currently under way for Caltrans to use the new paving methods on the Long Beach, Golden State and Pomona Freeways. •

## Task Force

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help commuters."

"What we are seeing is that the major dollars for the Governor's plan for traffic congestion relief are focused on Caltrans improvements," added Quon, "but the second part of the equation is focusing on this non-recurrent congestion." In addition, the Governor's total transportation program also includes improvements to signals on local arterials, the additional buses and a host of capital improvements to the highway system to more effectively move traffic. Currently there are 29 Caltrans improvement projects in Los Angeles County that are part of the Governor's Transportation Congestion Relief Plan (TCRP).

"Governor Gray Davis and Secretary Maria Contreras Sweet, Business, Transportation and Housing (BT&H),

have both made congestion relief a top priority," said CHP Captain Richard Briedvelt. "As part of BT&H, we are planning to implement strategies that will put some plans in place that are going to implement greater traffic flow and greater use of the resources we have." He said that the job of the task force is to arrive at a mutual agreement between the stakeholders on what can be done with existing resources to more efficiently move traffic and manage "sigalerts" (an incident expected to last 30 minutes or longer).

Quon said, "What the Task Force is committed to as a whole is results — to look at incidents and operations; review policies and procedures that could be improved upon; to develop a mutually agreeable, collective effort across Los Angeles County to better manage incidents in a more global fashion. Quon

also expects the group to look across the nation to study what other states are doing in the realm of incident detection methods, measures of verification with different types of incidents, incident magnitude and number of vehicles involved and what is really needed out there on the highways. Quon added, "With the experts on this Task Force, and by collectively focusing on incident management through the earliest detection, verification and deployment of resources, together we can get that roadway reopened in the quickest and safest manner possible — our number one goal." •



# ...RETIREE SPOTLIGHT...



Janet Muramoto proudly receives Superior Accomplishment Award from Frank Quon.

## Janet Muramoto Retires

The always friendly and helpful veteran Caltrans Traffic Operations employee, Janet Muramoto, recently retired after 37 years of outstanding Caltrans service. Muramoto was hired in February, 1964 in the Right of Way Appraisals steno pool. During the ensuing years and up until her retirement, she worked in Traffic Operations as a Caltrans Administrative Technician (CAT) and subsequent Assistant Caltrans Administrator. Muramoto assisted Frank Quon, Deputy District Director of Operations and Steve Leung, Office Chief of Operations, with the many daily administrative functions of the unit. Known for her cheerful, can-do attitude, she was an example of excellence in Caltrans customer service and also arranged countless tours of the Transportation Management Center (TMC) for universities and transportation agencies around the world.

"Janet was the ambassador for Operations and part of the nationally recognized Operations Program that is here in District 7 today," said Quon. "She has dedicated her time and efforts over the years to provide her highest level of service and attention to those who sought her assistance or just needed help navigating through Operations. Folks from across the nation and over the world came to depend on Janet to assist them in their

relations with Caltrans."

"Janet epitomizes someone who truly cares and devotes her entire career to promoting a positive image for Caltrans," added Leung. "She has always dedicated herself to place the welfare of the Department over her personal needs and completed each of her tasks with passion." According to Leung, some of her major contributions while working in Traffic Operations included vital support during the 1984 Los Angeles Olympics for traffic handling; and during the 1994 Northridge Earthquake for the traffic recovery effort; as well as the TMC grand opening and numerous visits by dignitaries.

Muramoto now looks forward to spending more time traveling and golfing. She was an active member and secretary of the Caltrans Golf Club for many years. "I want to thank everyone for their cards, gifts, lunches and special retirement party," she said. "I cherish the many friends I made at Caltrans over the years. They will be missed very much and I plan on keeping in touch. I would like to thank them all for sharing this long-awaited event with me."

Janet Muramoto will be missed by all who worked with her. Caltrans sends it best wishes to Janet for a long and fulfilling retirement – on and off the putting green. Thank you, Janet, for your outstanding service to Caltrans! •



Mr. Wayne Johnson, Superintendent  
Maintenance, West Region, Camarillo

Dear Mr. Johnson:

My girlfriend and I were saved by two Caltrans heroes: Mike Cabot and Alan Sharon. Driving south from San Francisco... in our rented SUV, we ran out of gas while traveling on Highway 33. Unfamiliar with the vehicle's fuel consumption, I simply hadn't planned well, and there we were, stranded in the middle of Los Padres National Forest in a raging blizzard. As you know, no gas equals no heat and it was freezing outside in a howling gale. Just as bad we rolled to a stop partly in the lane of travel where someone could easily hit us in the blizzard and darkness. We couldn't risk leaving the emergency lights on for fear of depleting the battery, so I had to stay alert throughout the night ready to turn on the lights. It turned out the road had been closed at the bottom and not a soul came by.... The next morning, huddled in the car, we saw lights coming down the road. Sure enough, it was a Caltrans snowplow, operated by Mike Cabot and Alan Sharon. Immediately recognizing our plight they tried to call out on their satellite phone but there was no reception. They offered us snack bars, their thermos of coffee and soup... and filled our tank with gas. Despite my insisting to pay for the fuel and compensate them for their troubles, they refused to accept anything, saying, "...We're glad to help." I didn't know people like this existed. Mr. Johnson, these guys are GREAT! On one hand I would recommend that you promote them to high-level executive positions, but then the public would be deprived of them on the roads. Maybe it would be better to keep them where they are most needed — as Heroes on the Highways. Thanks to Caltrans for employing such people, and again, THANKS to Mike and Alan."

Sincerely,  
Scott J. Keesling  
Los Angeles

# What's Cookin' At Caltrans

## SNOWBALLS

In honor of Caltrans Snow Crews!

From the *Television Food Network's* Emeril Lagasse



- |   |                                   |
|---|-----------------------------------|
| 2 cups coconut                          | 2 cups Oreo cookies               |
| 2 cups M&M's                            | 2 cups roasted peanuts            |
| 3 large zip-type plastic bags           | 4 pie tins/plates (disposable OK) |
| 4 large scoops chocolate mint ice cream | Store-bought chocolate sauce      |
| 4 large scoops vanilla ice cream        | 1 cup sweetened whipped cream     |
| 4 large scoops chocolate ice cream      | Shaker of powdered sugar          |
| 6 or more large, whole strawberries     |                                   |

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Place coconut on a parchment-lined baking sheet. Place the pan in oven and cook coconut until slightly toasted and golden 4-6 minutes. Remove from oven and cool. Place cookies in plastic bag. Place candy in plastic bag. Place peanuts in plastic bag. Using a small meat mallet or back of large spoon, carefully smash each bag so everything is in small pieces. Making sure ice cream is very hard, shape ice cream scoops into balls. Place scoops of ice cream on parchment-lined baking sheet. Place coconut, cookies, candy and nuts on four different pie tins/plates. Roll ice cream balls in whichever pie tin you want. Place ice cream balls back in the freezer. To serve, place two ice cream balls in each bowl. Drizzle chocolate sauce over ice cream. Garnish with whipped cream, strawberries and powdered sugar. Makes 6 servings.



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(213) 897-4867 • FAX (213) 897-3836  
<http://www.dot.ca.gov/dist07/>

EDITOR ..... **JEANNE BONFILIO**  
MEDIA RELATIONS CHIEF ..... **MARGIE TIRITILLI**  
STAFF WRITERS ..... **PAT REID**  
..... **IVY ESTRADA**  
GRAPHIC SERVICES ..... **MONICA MURILLO**  
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